

I Love You, Tomoko

by That Lonely Girl on a Laptop

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Summary: "I can see the ground I can't see you and see our hometown I can't see you. leave the lights on when I'll go so I can watch you down below..." Tomoki's relationship with his sister has been rocky for years, and heading to university in two days, he can't wait to be away from his annoying sibling. But when things unexpectedly go wrong, he will have to reconsider those thoughts...

I Love You, Tomoko

****This is just an updated version with some changes that were annoying me. ****

Tomoki Kuroki sighs as he tossed for the third time in a span of three seconds. He couldn't sleep. His mind is swimming with plans. In two days he will be in university. His first year. The black haired boy sighed quietly. He didn't know what to think about it all. He was going to embark on a new chapter in his life. He'd be living away from home for the first time. He would be completely independant and not have to depend on anyone for anything. He was glad to be eighteen. It would be a fresh beginning. He did look forward to the idea of making new friends there and learning new things. He knew that this particular university had the best soccer team in the area, and he was going to make it even greater. Everything was looking up for him and things were going to be great.

Tomoki sighs as he rolls onto his side to glance at his clock. It was only a few minutes past midnight! It felt so much later! He let out a sigh as he rolls back onto his back. He stared at his ceiling and went back into his thoughts.

Although he was really excited about university, he would miss his mum. He'd miss her cooking and her comfort. He let out a sigh, thinking about his mum. She had been gone for a long time... she was with his dad on a business trip, and while she kept in touch with him

almost the entire time, it was weird being in the house all alone. He'd miss his dad, although he didn't see him often, he would still miss his kindness. He'd miss his room, his friends, hell, even some of his teachers he would probably miss after time away. He would miss everyone.

Then the boy frowned as he suddenly thought of something that had, so far had gone right over his head: Tomoko.

The boy couldn't help but let out an annoyed sigh. Tomoko. What was he supposed to think about her? She had made his home life a living hell all through middle and high school. He frowned as he thought about all the things he could call her: Selfish, obnoxious, creepy, weird, annoying— Scary at times, the list went on for ages after that. He couldn't wait to get away from her nonsense. He wasn't even sure what Tomoko was even doing! She had practically the whole year in that room and he had barely seen her come out unless she had to use the bathroom or was forced to attend lectures by their mum.

But then the boy started to think. Suddenly, the gears inside his head began to turn. He sat up, staring into the darkness.

Things were odd with Tomoko. Usually that wasn't much of a statement, but he had noticed some strange changes in his older sister for some time now, but it was only now he began to wonder about them. He had previously figured that she was just being weird again. Coming up with one of her stupid get-popular-quick schemes which always failed. Tomoko was amazed how desperate the girl could get to achieve "popularity" which is hilarious in the sense that he has seen her in cafes, stuttering as if she was having a stroke simply trying to order from a menu!

But things have been getting stranger with Tomoko, even more than usual. If she was to leave the house, she would wear a thick hoodie and keep it up at all times. She'd wear gloves, even when it wasn't cold and she has now gone from sometimes-talking-but-not-much to not talking at all! Also, she would somehow always have already eaten when Tomoki ever offered to make her meals, but he never found any dishes from her! And he knew she wasn't just hoarding them in her room, he had counted! The only thing he could come up with was that she was eating out every night, but with who? And for what reason?

While he had noticed all of this, he never confronted Tomoko about it. He knew from experience that if he did, he'd just be roped into whatever scheme or stupid idea she had brewing in that messed up head of hers. It's happened too many times for him to fall for it again!

Tomoki sighed and lied back down before shutting his eyes again. He felt a bearing weight in his chest as he thought back into his past, right back to when the siblings were in kindergarten. Back to when they absolutely adored one another. They were inseparable, always together, and in love as much as two siblings could be. Hell, he even wanted to marry Tomoko at one point. The boy sighed heavily as his chest and wrists ached, God he missed those days— He wanted them back. He had so many wonderful memories of Tomoko when they were children. She used to be so kind and sweet— What happened? He didn't know, and he doubted he would ever find out. As he dug through his memories, there was one that stuck out to him far above the

others. He remembered the large oak tree in their back garden, how they used to dance and laugh together. They'd spin around the tree, holding hands, being close, laughing and singing for ages as the world drifted by without them. Nostalgia waved over the boy and he rolled into his side. His eyes began to feel heavy as he pictured that wonderful image in his head. He quickly brushed away any droplets that were leaking from his eyes. He wanted his sister backâ€¦ The sister he loved. He missed her so much that it was painful. He didn't know what to think of Tomoko now. It wasn't until their early teens where things started going wrong between them. When she started acting obnoxious towards him and pulling these stupid, petty pranks. He wouldn't have minded it so much if it didn't happen often, but the fact that she did it almost every day was enough for him to start hating her. He wanted his kind and loving sister back. Notâ€¦ That weirdo in the next room where he heard strange wheezing noises.

Waitâ€¦ wheezing noises? Tomoki bolted upright again, his senses suddenly alert. There was definitely something wrong. Usually he wouldn't question any weird sounds from Tomoko's room, but nothing like this. Through the plaster of the wall, it clearly sounded like the strained gasps of someone struggling to breathe! He had heard Tomoko cry before, but never this kind of noise!

While he assumed that it was nothing important, he couldn't take any chances. He slid his door open and peered into the dark hallway. It was strange, having only he and Tomoko in the house. He was so used to having his mum in the room next to his. It was only now he thought about it. It was un-nerving, the darkness coupled with the worrying wheezing sound from his sister's room. He went next door and knocked on it.

"Tomoko?" He asked loudly.

There was no response, just the wheezing noise.

"Tomoko?!" He called again, banging his fist on the door. As he did, he suddenly heard a grunt and the sound of sheets rustling.

"Are you ok?" He shouted into the door. This was not normal. Tomoko would usually have yelled at him to go away by now, but there was still no responseâ€¦. Maybe she was just asleep. Yeah, the boy thought as he moved away from the door. She was probably just snoring or something. But then something clicked in his head. Tomoko always stayed up late, no matter what was going on the next day. Or maybe she just wanted an early night. There was nothing wrong with that, right? Tomoki sighed and went to go back to his room.

****SLAM!****

Tomoki's heart stopped as he turned back around and without thinking about it, ran back to his sister's door, his mind pounding with worry.

"Tomoko!? I'm coming in there!" He yelled as he shoved the door open. Once he was inside and had turned on the light, he was alarmed by the sight that met his eyes.

Tomoko was lying on the floor just next to her bed, which explained

the loud thud. This was the first time he had been able to look at her without her having her hood up or refusing to look at him. He was shocked to see that he could almost see every bone on her body. She was wearing her orange shorts and greenish blue jumper with brown sleeves but he could see every bone on her legs, hands and face. Her cheeks were sunken in and so were her eyes. Her usual eye bags had become worse, they were now black and surrounded the whole eye. Her sunken eyes themselves were dull and completely lifeless, as if she were dead. The only way he knew she wasn't was by the fact that she was blinking and her chest was moving sharply as she struggled to get a breath in. Every inhale would end with a raspy wheeze and every exhale was laboured. She was curled up on her side, clinging to her stomach and whimpering in agony and her whole feeble frame was shivering violently, despite the fact that it was summer and the room was roasting. Tomoki's heart and mind raced a thousand miles a minute. What was happening to his sister!?

Tomoko let out another sharp cry of pain which made Tomoki jump out of his daze. He knelt by her side and put his hand on her shoulder. She felt so coldâ€¦

"Tomoko? Can you hear me?" He shook her shoulder, desperate for her to respond.

"Tomâ€¦" She squeaked feebly, still shaking. Her voice sounded hoarse and painful, like sand paper.

"It's ok, nee-chan, I'm here. It's going to be ok." Tomoki said in the gentlest tone he could, hoping it would comfort his frightened sibling. His heart was feeling heavier than he had ever experienced. How long had she been lying in bed like that? He didn't to imagine her curled up and crying in pain for hours, oh Godâ€¦ why did it take so long for him to investigate? Why didn't he check on her the second he hear her gasping?

"I'mâ€¦ C-coldâ€¦" a sob broke his thoughts and turned his attention back to Tomoko. He put his hand against her forehead. She was burning up terribly! Her whole body was sweating and hot yet she was shivering as if she were in a blizzard.

"I know, nee-chan I know. I'm gonna get you all warmed up!" Tomoki answered quickly as he picked her up softly. Expecting her to be heavier, he almost fell backwards at the force he stood up at. She barely weighed a thing! As he held her in his grip, he could feel every curve and sharp point in her body, she was almost like a skeleton with skin and hair!

He decided that he should take her into his room. He had extra blankets under his bed. They were usually for when Tomoko wanted to sleep in his room. He wasn't exactly sure why she would want to sleep in his room but at this point he really didn't care. He gently placed the girl on his bed and turned his light on. She looked so illâ€¦ She was looking at him with an expression which he could only be described as a mixture of fear and despair. Her eyes were so dark he could barely see the green in them anymore.

"It's going to be ok, Tomoko, I promise." He tried to assure her as he threw his blanket over her frame and tuck her in. But even under the blanket, she was still shivering terribly. What could he do? She looked up at him and he noticed tear tracks down her eyes, as if she

had been cutting her face. He couldn't imagine how scared she must be. What could he do? He never thought he would have to deal with this, why couldn't their parents be here? Thinking deeply, he looked back at Tomoko, who had now managed to sit upright, albeit shakily and had the blanket around her. Her body was still quaking and she had her skinny arm around her barely existing stomach. Tomoki sat on the bed next to her and fiddled with her blanket, wrapping it tighter around her. She looked at him slowly and gave him a small and grateful smile. But he couldn't ignore her emaciated body, something had to be done. Just as that thought passed through his mind, he jumped as Tomoko suddenly let out a violent sounding retch and fell sideways. Tomoki had to catch her before she fell off the side of the bed and lied her back onto his bed.

"Everything's going to be ok." He assured her as he gave her a gentle nudge. Tomoko groaned as she gritted her teeth and shut her eyes. His heart sank into his stomach. It was a lot worse than he originally thought. He couldn't say that of course.

Neither of them moved or spoke in a long time. All Tomoki could do was gently stroke her hair and occasionally "shhh" gently if she started crying. He didn't know what else he could doâ€¦ the only thing he could think of was getting her something to eat. But he was afraid that maybe she was too far gone to eat. He had been told in biology that this can happen. But it was worth a shot.

"Nee-chan?" He asked her. She didn't open her eyes but let out a short sigh.

"I'm going to go downstairs for a few minutes- I'll come back, I promise!" He added quickly as her eyes suddenly snapped open and she let out a frightened yelp, "I won't be long, I promise!" Tomoko let out a long groan and put her face back into the pillow, not having the will or strength to answer back. This only worried Tomoki worse, usually Tomoko would snap at or insult him for not doing what she wanted. Giving his sister one more stroke of her hair, he left the room and quickly made his way downstairs.

"Come on, come on!" Tomoki growled as he paced the kitchen with his phone to his ear. He could hear his mum's ringtone on the other end, what was taking so long? Suddenly, he heard a click.

"Hello?" The tired yet familiar voice of their mother relaxed him.

"Mum, it's me." He answered bluntly.

"Tomoki? What are you doing calling at this time? It's almost one in the morning!" She scolded him, but then her voice changed, "Something's wrong, isn't it? What is it? Are you ok?"

"Yes, there's something wrong!"

"What is it? Are you sick?"

"It's not me, mum, it's Tomoko!"

"Tomokoâ€¦? what is it now?" Tomoki's eyes widened, why did she suddenly sound less concerned?

"Something's wrong with her!" Tomoki then went into explaining how he had found her and how she was barely alive as well as the condition she was in. Their mum didn't say anything the whole time until he finished.

"Oh my God!" she whispered, "W-what are you going to do?" She asked, suddenly sounding more panicked.

"I'm in the kitchen, I'm going to try and get her to eat something. I'm sure there was some porridge or something."

"Ok, then what?"

Tomoki paused and stammered. He didn't think that far ahead. What else could he do? He was debating with himself as to whether or not it would be worth taking her to the hospital. She seemed to far gone for anything to be done. He wished he could; he wanted to make everything better.

"I don't know." He answered her finally, his throat started to feel closed up as he began to realise the only possible outcome he could think of, "I...I'm scared that something's going to happen..."

"Don't say that, Tomoki!"

"But I-"

"No buts! Look, we'll get the next flight possible, but in the meantime just stay with her! Do anything you can to keep her comfortable as possible, do everything you can! We'll see how she is in the morning!"

Tomoki gulped harshly. The morning? That felt like an eternity away. He didn't know what to think about that. He didn't like thinking about time, but what else could he do? He had no way to get to the hospital anyway and he wasn't sure if it would be worth it.

"...Ok, mum." He finally answered, "I'll do that."

"Good, keep in touch with me and call me if anything changes. We'll try to be back tomorrow and we'll see how she is then and if we can get her to hospital. Just try to make her comfortable." She replied.

"I will keep in touch, I promise." He sighed, his hands feeling shaky as he held the phone to his ear. Was this really happening?

"Ok I'll phone later"

"Alright"

"Bye."

"Bye." Tomoki immediately shut off his phone and went into the cereal cupboard. After a few moments, he found the box of porridge. He wished there was something better, but he didn't know what. It was the only thing he could think about feeding her that wouldn't immediately make her more sick. Going through another cupboard, he

found a bottle of honey. He grabbed it instantly. He wasn't sure if Tomoko liked porridge, but he knew that she really liked honey.

Upstairs, Tomoko sobbed as she shivered under the blanket that Tomoki had given her. She could barely bring herself to open her eyes, the lights hurt her terribly. Her head was pounding horribly, feeling as if it was going to explode. Her migraine had been perpetual for weeks, the throbbing pain was too much for her to cope with. Her stomach ached horribly, as if it was trying to digest itself from its lack of feeding. Her chest and throat burned from chronic acid reflux. She wished it would just stopâ€¦ she couldn't cope anymoreâ€¦ she wanted her pain to endâ€¦ And it was all her own faultâ€¦ It was her fault nobody caredâ€¦. It was her fault she was aloneâ€¦ it was her fault nobody ever tried anymore.

Tomoko pulled the covers closer around her, desperate for warmth. How could it be that she was sweating buckets and yet she was so cold?

Lifting herself up onto her elbows, Tomoko groaned as she opened her eyes slowly, the light burning into them and her migraine intensified. Where was Tomoki? She wanted Tomokiâ€¦ where was he?

"Tomokiâ€¦?" She whimpered, looking into the darkened hall. There was no response. She shut her eyes again for another moment before opening them back up, it hurt just as badly as it had before.

"Tomoki, where are you?" She cried out weakly. Tears started falling from her aching and sunken eyes as she started to become frightened. Did he leave? Was he not coming back? She couldn't bear the thought of being all alone now.

"Please come back!" She whimpered as she clung onto a pillow for comfort. She didn't want to be aloneâ€¦ She wanted him here with herâ€¦ He was being so gentle with her, something she hadn't experienced in so long. And she couldn't remember the last time he called her 'nee-chan'. It was his name for her when they were children. Tomoko sighed and closed her eyes, trying to escape into her memories. But her migraine was too intense for her to think about anything. She couldn't remember anything. All of her early memories of childhood were a sweet and warm blur. All she could hope was that Tomoki would come back. He was all she wanted...

After a few more minutes, Tomoki finished stirring the sizable amount of honey into the warm porridge. The sweet and oaty smell filled the room and comforted the boy. It made him feel warm and safe, taking him back to his childhood. When he and Tomoko would go to their grandmother's. Their grandmother liked the same meal and would have it almost every time they were there. They used to try and fish in her pond or they'd play tag or hide-and-seek in the garden. The boy shook his head softly.

'I have to stop thinking about the past.' Tomoki thought, _ 'She needs me now! '_

Taking the bowl of porridge, he put it on a tray alongside several glasses of water as well as the bottle of honey, personally he didn't

like the stuff so if Tomoko wanted more she could have it. He had also found pain relief pills in one of the cupboard. He also grabbed the basin that lived under the sink. He was taking every precaution he could.

"Tomoki!" He could just hear her weak and scared tone from upstairs.

"I'm coming, Tomoko!" He called up.

Carefully, he made his way back upstairs and his room. The door was still open and the light was coming out into the hallway. Tomoki's chest tightened as he could hear Tomoko's strained breathing as he got closer.

When he walked in, his heart sank again as he saw his sister, still in the same position he had left her in. But the blanket had fallen off, leaving her frail body exposed. Putting the tray down, he gently sat her up against the wall of the room on a pillow. Her head hung limply to the side and she seemed to have no strength whatsoever. Tomoki grabbed the porridge and sat next to her, letting her lean against him. He stirred the porridge and took a small spoonful of it.

"Tomoko, I got you some porridge." He said, trying to keep his voice calm. The last thing he wanted to do was make her worry.

Tomoko lifted her head and looked at the bowl. The sweet scent of the porridge and honey was filling the room. The girl inhaled the scent but immediately let out a pained cry, which made Tomoki almost throw the bowl in the air. Tomoko whined as she clung onto her concave and practically non-existing stomach as it let out a loud and painful sounding rumble as it both demanded to be fed and begged not to be at the same time.

Tomoki's heart dropped again for about the tenth time that night. This was double edged sword. One the one hand, she needed to eat and he hoped that it would make her feel better. But on the other hand, doing so might just make her worse. Either way, he had to try.

"Come on, nee-chan, it's got honey in it. You like honey." He said in what he hoped to be an encouraging tone as he took a spoonful from the bowl.

"I...don't want it." She whined, keeping her eyes closed, her body was still shaking.

"I promise, it will make you feel better." He said gently, "Just try it. Please." He pushed the spoon towards her mouth as he said this, which made Tomoko open her eyes a little. He saw her look at it. She was hungry, and she knew that she was hungry but would she actually take it?

"No"

Tomoki sighed, "Tomoko, if you don't eat it I'll force feed you." He stated bluntly. He half expected Tomoko to make a lewd comment about that but he guessed that he shouldn't. Tomoko looked at the spoon again before looking back towards him, a cheeky glint in her limp eyes.

"Justâ€¦ don'tâ€¦" she croaked.

"Don't what?"

"Don'tâ€¦ pour it onto my face like I did to youâ€¦ when you had that cold."

Tomoki blinked, and it took him a few seconds to remember what she was talking about. He remembered how angry he was with her but, looking back on it he had to admit it was actually kind of funny.

"No, I won't do that." He answered, unable to stop himself from laughing a little, "I will get back at you for it one day though, so you just watch your back!" Tomoko gave him a weak smile.

_ 'Why did you say that, you idiot?' _ His inner thoughts cursed him, _ 'You don't even know what's going to happen!' _ the boy looked at his sister, who was now resting her sore head against his chest and licking the spoon slowly. He had to keep her spirits up.

"You like it?" He asked her, getting another small spoonful. She glanced at the bowl but then looked back up at him.

"...More honey." She blinked before letting out a hoarse sigh, "Please."

Tomoki smiles, "Sure, since you said please." he took the bottle of honey and squeezed the rest of it into the porridge. It was now all goopy and more honey than porridge, the boy was glad that he didn't have to eat it. He mixed it in and then gave her another spoonful. She didn't take as long to finish this one.

As he fed her the porridge (which took a very long time since she could only eat about an eighth of a spoonful at a time), he couldn't help but think back to that incident that Tomoko had mentioned. He remembered how, after the piping hot liquid had fallen onto his face, he retaliated by kicking Tomoko in the back. He was surprised that he didn't break it. But as he thought about that, he started to remember other times where he hurt his sister. He clearly remembered times when he would grab her by the face and squeeze so tight that it left a mark. Sure, at the time they were justified but now, looking back at those times he started to feel his chest tighten in spasms of guilt. Maybe it was just because of the situation at hand, but he felt genuinely guilty for ever hurting Tomokoâ€¦ even if she did deserve it at the time. That and "don't talk to me at school", when he thought about it now, was cruel of him. Tomoko wasn't like himâ€¦ she didn't have friends. Sure, she had Yuu in middle school and high school, but that all changed when Yuu justâ€¦ seemed to forget about herâ€¦ she had her own life in her school, her own friends and her own social circle. A circle that Tomoko was eventually pushed out of. He never quite found out why. Either she was pushed out by Yuu's other friends, or she pushed herself out. Knowing how painfully shy his sibling was, he guessed that the latter was the more likely reason. For all he knew, she was completely alone in the world. And he only made that worse for her.

A tug on his shirt turned his attention back to Tomoko. She was still leaning on him, she wasn't shivering as terribly as before and when

he took one of her hands, it wasn't like ice anymore.

"What's wrong? Do you want more?" He offered her another small spoonful. But much to his dismay, she shook her head and let out a small groan since it probably hurt her head to do that. He looked at the bowl and sighed, at first glance, it looked like it hadn't been touched. Though for Tomoko, it was a lot. He still didn't know how long she had gone with no food. He hopes that the porridge would be soft enough on her stomach and it wouldn't make her sick.

"Ok, well if you don't want any more porridge, I have some water for you. And these." He showed her the pills, "It might help with the pain." But then he said this, he suddenly realised that if Tomoko struggled to eat porridge, how on earth was she supposed to swallow pills? Those things were hard enough to swallow as they were, never mind the fact that she could barely swallow.

"Would it be easier for me to cut these in half?" He asked, although it was probably a stupid question. Tomoko didn't seem to think so as she gave him a weak nod before shutting her eyes and resting her head on his chest. Tomoki sighed and gently moved her hair from her eyes. He had no idea how much longer this was going to last. Or what was going to happen.

By the time he had managed to get her to take the pills, it was close to two in the morning. But he didn't feel tired. Not at all, his only concern was Tomoko. She was still in a very bad way. At least she had now eaten and had something to drink. He didn't know how much good it was doing, but at least it was something.

"Nee-chan? How are you feeling?" He asked her. He could only hope that things were going to get better for her. She looked up at him and gave him a shaky thumbs-up. His heart sank.

"You can be honest you know. But then again that's always been quite hard for you, hasn't it?" He gave her a smirk, wanting to make it clear to her that he was teasing. Though he had made the same comment before, but as an insult.

She looked like she was going to say something, but she suddenly started whimpering and tears started leaking from her closed eyes. Tomoki stroked her hair gently, wanting to reassure her.

"Iâ€¦ feelâ€¦ fucking awfulâ€¦" she sobbed, which only made Tomoki hold her even closer.

"I know, I knowâ€¦" he sighed, looking out his window to look at the stars in the night sky, "It's going to be ok."

"Noâ€¦ it won'tâ€¦"

"Don't be such a pessimist. You're going to be fine." His voice was still gentle, but had a firmer tone this time to the last times he spoke. He wasn't sure if he was trying to convince her of if he was only trying to convince himself that she was going to be alright.

Tomoki lied her back onto his bed and sat on the edge of it, with her head on his lap. He gently preened her hair as he sat there, staring ahead at the TV, which was switched off. They were quiet, until

Tomoko let out a groan of pain.

"What's wrong?" Tomoki jumped as his muscles tensed at the first sign of a problem.

"The lightâ€¦" Tomoki looked up at the light on the ceiling which was illuminating the whole room. He didn't have any problems with it, but he knew that for Tomoko, with her migraine, it must have felt like someone was flashing a torch right into her eyes which would just enrage the pain.

"Ok, hold on I'll turn it off." He did just that, and as he turned to look at Tomoko, he noticed that she had finally opened her eyes fully. They were twitching, everything was still agonising for her. She groaned as she managed to sit herself upright, still grabbing the blanket that was around her. As she did, Tomoki noticed something strange. One of her sleeves had rolled up when she sat up and he could have sworn that he saw scratches on it. Without saying anything, he sat next to her and took her arm, ignoring her little squeak of protest. Rolling up her sleeve, he was alarmed to find traces of old cuts, scratches and scars. Her once pale skin was now red and painful. He could barely find anywhere on her arm that hadn't been cut. His hands shook as he looked at her arm.

"Oh, Tomokoâ€¦" he croaked, suddenly becoming distressed at the thought of his sister doing this to herself. She was crying now, looking at him with complete guilt.

"Iâ€¦" she whimpered, "I'm sorryâ€¦"

"No, don't be sorry!" He pulled her closer into a hug. She didn't have to explainâ€¦ he knew why she did it. Years of depression, loneliness and despair was the culprit. Stress from isolation caused her headaches and self mutilationâ€¦ made her feel illâ€¦ too ill to eatâ€¦ lack of food only made her sickerâ€¦ which caused more stress and more isolation. Everything was cycling together in one vicious circle with no endâ€¦ and he wasn't there to stop it. If only he had noticed soonerâ€¦ he could have saved her. He felt hot pressure build up behind his eyes as the urge to cry swept over him. Why didn't he do something? Why hadn't he checked on her sooner and stop this? Why hadn't anyone helped her sooner? He wasn't the only one in the house! Their mum was usually hereâ€¦ she should have known too. But he couldn't blame anyone else. His room was right next to hers. It would have been so easy just to go and check on her. But he didn'tâ€¦

He thought all the way back to Tomoko's first day of high school. She had come into his room to annoy him which was normal for her. He remembered how he got angry with her and told her to die. Her response was "Okay, I'll kill myself." Back then it was just to guilt trip him into spending time with her. But when he thought back on it nowâ€¦ Tomoki sighed as he thought this. God, he wished he actually took that seriously. It was probably the first sign he had to tell him that something was wrongâ€¦ Tomoki gasped as he felt tears leaking out of his eyes even more than before.

"I'm so sorry, Tomokoâ€¦" he held her tightly, while making sure he didn't hurt her, "I'm sorry that this has been happening to youâ€¦ I wish I did something sooner." He was trying his hardest not to sob, but couldn't stop his breath from being shaky and letting out the occasional gasp. He was surprised to feel Tomoko put her arms around

him and hug him back.

"Wellâ€¦ you're doing something now." She said as she hugged him. Tomoki stared off into spaceâ€¦ he couldn't remember the last time the siblings had hugged. The only physical contact he had with Tomoko over the last few years were when he would hurt her. Their mum would hit her tooâ€¦ usually after Tomoko snapped at her or did something else to annoy her, but still. No wonder she didn't tell them. Neither of them ever helped her before, so why should he be surprised that she never came to him or their mum for help?

"Tomoki?" His thoughts were broken as Tomoko pulled away. She put a shaky and cold hand onto his and looked at him in the eye.

"I'mâ€¦ I'm sorry." She said quietly, "For everythingâ€¦ I'm sorry for being such a horrible sister. I'm sorry for hurting you and annoying you andâ€¦ I'm justâ€¦ sorry." Her voice broke and she started crying again, "I'm an awful personâ€¦"

At these words, Tomoki shook his head furiously, "Don't say that, nee-chan-!"

"It's true!" She sobbed, "I meanâ€¦ mum once told me 'I am ashamed to have you as my daughter, Tomokoâ€¦' If my own mum doesn't want me then who would?!" she started crying harder at this. Tomoki grabbed her and pulled her onto his lap, holding onto her in a hug. He didn't know what to say. He had a really good relationship with his mother, so he didn't see this. He couldn't begin to imagine what that must have felt like. He stroked her back in an attempt to comfort her, he couldn't stop himself from shuddering as he could feel every vertebra that was there. He wished he could say something to make it all betterâ€¦ but he didn't know what. He had never been in her situation, he had never felt like everyone hated him.

Again, neither of them spoke for some time. Tomoki held her as she cried into his chest. His heart was so heavy, it was unbearable. He had heard Tomoko cry before but he never cared about it. And any time he did notice, it was usually one of those stupid, over exaggerated fake wails that nobody wanted to hear. But now, her cries were genuine, full of heartbreak and despair. He looked out of the window again and towards the stars. There were so many of them, lighting the dark sky. He felt Tomoko move against his chest as she also turned to look out of the window.

"They're pretty, aren't they? The stars." Tomoki said, trying to distract his sister from her pain. She let out a shaky sigh.

"...I want to be a star." She answered softly.

"Hm, this isn't another one of your get-popular-quick schemes, is it?" Tomoki asked with a smile on his face, "You know those don't work, right?"

Tomoko sighed and her body tensed up. She had given up on those long ago... her migraine had come back as well as her stomach ache. Everything hurt again, like it did before. She could only lean on her brother for support, holding onto him. She felt like she was going to be sickâ€¦ Tomoki felt this and quickly grabbed the basin he had brought up from the kitchen. She looked out of the window to look at the stars.

"...No. I meanâ€¦ an actual star." She said finally.

"Really? Why?" Her brother leaned against the wall behind his bed, letting her rest on him.

"Stars aren't lonelyâ€¦ there are so many of them."

Tomoki looked at the sky. She was right. There was no moon but the sky was still bright with those stars. It quite an amazing sight. He looked at his sister, who was still heaving as if about to be sick.

"Come onâ€¦" He sat her up with her feet over the side of the bed and handed her the basin, just in case. He sighed and rubbed her back softly.

"You know mum loves you, right?" He said, wanting to reassure her, "She doesn't hate you. Nobody does." Tomoko gulped and looked at him, still looking lost.

"Thenâ€¦ why does she hit me? I meanâ€¦ I've said bad things butâ€¦"

Tomoki winced violently, "Don't dwell on that. Mum does love you, remember that."

Tomoko sighed again, he gently stroked her back.

"Andâ€¦ you remember all those times I said I hated you, told you to kill yourselfâ€¦ and that I didn't want you as a sister? Don't believe it." He stroked her hair again, "Please_ don't_ believe any of it for a minute. I take it all back. I know you are a good person, you justâ€¦ don't know how to always show it sometimes. But I just want you to know that I do love you, nee-chan. I'm so sorry if I made you feel like I didn't." He gave her a little kiss on the top of her head, "I'm glad you're my sister."

Tomoko looked at him with the widest eyes the boy had ever seen. As if she couldn't believe what he had just said. She opened her mouth to respond, but before she could say anything, her stomach heaved and she started throwing up the porridge she had previously eaten. Tomoki winced as she vomited. All he could do was pat her back and say soothing things to her, his head and stomach was twisting with worry.

Finally, Tomoko seemed to be finished. She groaned and flopped sideways onto the bed. She let out a pained groan and shut her eyes, curling up again with her arms around her stomach. Tomoki sighed and looked at the phone. Half past two, he should call their mum again to give her an update. He hesitantly glanced at the basin and then back to Tomoko.

"Nee-chan, I'm going to take the basin and porridge downstairs, I'll be back in a few minutes." He told her. Tomoko only sighed and pulled the cover over her, still shivering.

"Tomoki? What's going on? Is she alright?" There wasn't even a hello, just these questions that greeted Tomoki when he called their mum. He sighed as he placed the now clean basin on the counter.

"I really don't know." He answered truthfully as he put the rest of the porridge in the fridge, "I fed her the porridge, but she threw it back up about half an hour later. She seems to have a lot of stomach pain and is generally just not well at all."

"Throwing up constant pain, could it be stomach ulcers?" Tomoki's heart jumped into his throat at this question, every ailment she had scared him more than the last.

"I-I-I don't know, maybe? It's not just that!"

"I know you told me."

"When will you be back?!" The boy asked desperately, he didn't know how much longer he could cope with this!

"I don't know, honey." His mother's voice sounded disappointed, "There aren't any flights, it's really bad weather here. I don't think we'll get home anytime soon."

Tomoki's heart completely dropped. They weren't coming home? The black haired boy sighed heavily and ran his hand through his hair.

"Ok... do you want to talk to Tomoko or?" He asked her.

He heard her let out a long, sad sigh "I would love to but I don't think I should. It'll just upset her."

Tomoki couldn't answer for several moments.

"So what should I do now?"

"I'm not sure. I say she should get some sleep and don't try and feed her again if she's not going to keep it down. We'll see how she is in the morning."

"Okay, mum." The boy sighed, pressure building up in his eyes again. The reality of what was really happening was finally dawning upon of him. He let out a sigh.

"Tomoki?" His mum's voice made him jump.

"Yes?"

"I love you so much."

He wasn't expecting her to say this, but he could understand why. Maybe the reality of what was happening was dawning on her too.

"I love you too, mum." He answered, now unable to stop the tears from his eyes, "I'll phone you tomorrow."

"Okay, honey."

"Bye."

"Bye"

Tomoki leant against the counter of the kitchen and looked back outside. The stars were just as bright as they were before, bathing the garden in a silver glow. He looked at the large oak tree and sighed. He imagined their young selves laughing and dancing around it without a care in the world. He wished they could do that again. But his thoughts had to be here, he couldn't keep drifting off like thisâ€¦

As he went back into his room with the basin, he saw that Tomoko had sat herself up and was staring out of the window, looking at the street in front of their house, watching cars roll by quietly under the spotlights of the street lamps on either side of the road. She looked back towards him and gave him a small sigh. She looked exhausted. He was exhausted. Tomoki released a long yawn before looking towards her again.

"Maybe you should get some sleep." He suggested. He looked down the hall and to Tomoko's room. He had the idea that she wouldn't want to sleep in her own room. And he didn't like the idea either. She would be aloneâ€¦ and he didn't want her to be alone. Not anymore. She had been on her own for too long.

He looked at his own room. Usually, if Tomoko wanted to sleep in his room, he'd make her sleep on the floor. But she would be uncomfortable like that. He could let her sleep in his bed with himâ€¦ just this once.

Tomoko was still shivering badly. Tomoki saw this and grabbed an extra blanket to put around her. He also went back to her room and got her round, soft plushy for her to cuddle. He got into bed first and once Tomoko was under the covers with him, wrapped in her other blanket with her plushy, he threw the covers over them both and put his arms around his sister's frail frame. Her hands were still cold, but he didn't care. He just wanted her to feel safe. Lying in the warmth of his bed, he began to feel sleep take over his body. Before he succumbed to the slumber, he ran his hand through Tomoko's hair, pushing it from her eyes.

"I love you, Tomoko." He whispered, "I love you so much." Before giving her a kiss on her cold forehead. Her eyes were closed, and her breathing was raspy and laboured but through her pain, she was able to give him a small smile.

"Tomokiâ€¦" she whispered, barely audibly "...I love you tooâ€¦"

Tomoki gave her another kiss on the forehead, "Sweet dreamsâ€¦" he sighed as he brought her closer, letting her wrap her skinny leg around him for support. The two siblings slept as the stars twinkled on outsideâ€¦ the world seemed to be held in a dreamlike stillness, as if everything was right on earth. The oak tree swayed silently in the quiet wind as the clouds rolled by sleepily. Everything was peaceful.

Morning passed on just as peacefully as the night had. The sunlight through the window caused the boy's eyes to flutter open. His sleep had been long and undisturbed. He woke up and his room was full of light and silence. But the mood was shattered as he was suddenly alarmed by the feeling of Tomoko's hand, which he had been clinging to all night. It was colder than ever. It was like ice.

"Tomoko?" He sprang up, looking at his sibling. She wasn't shivering or moving.

"Tomoko!" He gently pushed her face, her skin was pale and freezing. She still had that little smile from when the pair had fallen asleep. But that was it. Oh no...

"Tomoko!" He wailed again, his panic rising rapidly, "Wake up!" He shook her forcefully, desperately hoping this was just a cruel joke or he was dreaming.

"Wake up, nee-chan! Wake up! PLEASE WAKE UP!" He cried, tears streaming down his face like a pair of waterfalls, his stomach twisted and his heart felt like a ton of lead.

"Tomoko" he whimpered, his whole body shaking in grief as he moved the hair from her closed eyes.

"Nee-chan...Wake up!" He sobbed, putting his forehead against hers, letting the tears flow freely from his eyes onto her cheeks. This couldn't be happening it just couldn't! Everything he did last night it didn't matter she was gone. But he wanted her here with him!

He cradled her for ages, unable to stop himself from crying as he looked at her lifeless face. She looked so peaceful, the most peaceful he had seen in such a long time. He stroked her hair gently, it kept falling back into her eyes. She looked like she was just sleeping...

Tomoki's shaky head raised as he heard a buzz on his desk. His phone. He gulped and wiped his eyes. What was he supposed to say? He took his phone and put it to his ear.

"H-hello?" He squeaked, his voice still shaky. He kept looking back towards Tomoko lying on his bed. His heart was pounding painfully.

"Tomoki!" His mother's voice cried on the other end of the phone. Just the sound of her voice was enough to make the eighteen year old start crying again. She picked up on it.

"Are you okay? How's Tomoko? Is she okay?" Tomoki breathed in heavily and looked upward, dreading the words he was about to say.

"I um I'm sorry, mum. I'm so sorry."

"What?"

"I really am"

"Tomoki, you're scaring me, what is it!?" She cried, now sounding frightened.

"It's Tomoko sh-she.." Tomoki shut his eyes, mentally preparing himself for what he was about to say, "She died, mum."

There was silence on the other end of the phone, all he could hear was a gasp. Then nothing.

"M-mum?" He squeaked.

"_D-died!?" Her distraught cry rang into his ear, only making his own tears fall harder. He sat on his bed.

"During the nightâ€¦ I-I don't know whenâ€¦ but, she's gone." Saying those words felt like another dagger in his heart. He couldn't believe he was saying this.

"In her sleep?" She was crying too, he could hear it in her voice.

"I-I think soâ€¦ I hope so."

There was silence between them. All Tomoki could do was watch Tomoko, praying that if he stared hard enoughâ€¦ she might wake up. He could picture it. She'll jump up from her limp position, cackling at how she fooled him and he should have seen the look on his face and he would be angry for three seconds but then grab her in a hug and everything would be okayâ€¦

It didn't happenâ€¦ she just lied there.

"Mum?" He asked worryingly, "Are you okay?"

"Ohâ€¦" a sniffing voice answered, "Iâ€¦ I just told your father. We'll be home as soon as possibleâ€¦ justâ€¦ look after yourselfâ€¦ ohâ€¦" the sobbing started again and he heard the phone shifting around.

"Hey, sonâ€¦" his father's voice greeted him gloomily.

"Dadâ€¦" what else could he say? He knew.

"Are you okay?"

What was he supposed to say? Yes? No? What was to be said? All he could give was a low sigh.

"Okay, sonâ€¦" he sighed softly, "We'llâ€¦ talk about it when we are homeâ€¦"

Tomoki nodded, even though his dad couldn't see it. He sighed, appreciating how he was not trying to make him talk about it. It would be too painful.

"Okay, dadâ€¦" there weren't any words after that. He turned his phone off and looked back at Tomoko. A fresh wave of tears fell from his eyes as he knelt next to the bed, staring at her face. He desperately wished she would open her eyes. He stroked her hair softly. He still couldn't believe itâ€¦

Tomoki sniffed and put his forehead against her's and stroked her gently, like he was still comforting her.

"I'm sorry I couldn't do moreâ€¦" he sobbed into her forehead, still wishing she could hear him, "I'm sorry I didn't help you soonerâ€¦ I could have saved you!" He couldn't stop himself from crying now. Something he hadn't done in years.

He sat on the bed and pulled Tomoko onto his lap. Her head rested against his chest, just like she did last night. She was still smiling.

"I love you, nee-chan, I love you so much!" he whispered into her hair as he stroked it, kissing her one more time, "I'm sorry, Tomoko! I love you so much!"

Two hours later, Mr and Mrs Kuroki came home. They found Tomoki in his room, still holding Tomoko and still saying those same words. It took him a few moments to realise that they were there. He didn't want to let go of her. He wanted to hold her forever. When he saw his mother's expression, he gently placed her on the bed and wrapped his arms around his mother, letting her cry onto his shoulder. She was just as distraught as he was. His father kept quiet, wrapping his arms around his wife and son, embracing them in a tight hug. His face was pale and he was shaking. Tomoki didn't know how long they stood there for but it felt like an eternity. Time seemed to slow down as every minute felt like it lasted for an hour.

The rest of that day was a blur for Tomoki. He could remember his mother crying as she hugged Tomoko, sobbing that she was sorry for everything she had said and that she did love her, regardless of anything she said. She lamented on how she should never have said those things, even when Tomoki assured her that Tomoko knew she didn't hate her.

"But still!" she sobbed, "I should have told her that last night! I should have talked to her and told her I love her and it didn't matter what she did or what kind of person she was! she's still my baby!" She then let out a small gasp, "She's my baby! and I would hit her!" She then broke down in tears again. His dad phoned everyone within the family, pacing back and forth in the garden. Tomoki had never see his dad smoke so much like he did that day. The bin was filled with cigarette butts and the kitchen stank of it. He didn't want to be in the house knowing that Tomoko was in there.

Tomoki didn't remember eating or drinking anything that day. He spent a lot of his time holding his grieving mother, letting her release her thoughts and grievances. All he really wanted was to be alone with Tomoko! he wanted to talk to her. He still had so much to say, even though she wouldn't hear him. He wished he could!

Tomoki didn't go to university the next day as he had planned. He couldn't bear to! knowing that Tomoko was gone. He didn't want them to take her away. He wanted to hold her. But what good would that do? That wouldn't bring her back...

The funeral came and went. It was all a blur to him. A blur of silences, crying and people in black. Nobody was told how she died. Nobody saw her. He knew that Tomoko always felt patronised when people pitied her. And afterwards, he just sat in the garden as he heard all the chatter of people inside the house. The boy let out a long, low sigh. He didn't like being in the house anymore. He didn't like the kitchen, as when he opened the fridge he saw the bowl of porridge and honey. He didn't like the hall because that's where he paced back and forth while phoning his mum. He didn't like the upstairs because Tomoko's room was right next to his! and it was

empty. He didn't go into her room, knowing she wouldn't be there. He couldn't bring himself to be in his own room because that's where she wasâ€|

"Oh, nee-chanâ€| why did this have to happen?" He sighed, "I wish you were still hereâ€| I miss you." That was a phrase he thought he'd never say. But was trueâ€| Although he did not have much interaction with Tomoko in the last few years, he'd miss the knowledge of herâ€| being there. He'd miss the feeling of knowing that she was just in the next room to him, doing her own thingâ€| but still there.

"Tomoki?" A quiet voice made him jump, he turned to see his young cousin, Ki standing behind him. His heart sank a little, a part of him wanted it to be Tomoko, standing there looking at him with one of her weird smiles, the kind of smile where he knew she was up to something.

"Ohâ€| hello, Ki." he greeted her glumly before going back to staring at the tree in their gardenâ€| where he and Tomoko used to playâ€|

"Are you okay?" She asked as she sat next to him. Tomoki wasn't sure how to react. He didn't see Ki that much, and whenever she did come over, it was usually to see Tomoko, rather than him. Not that he minded, but it meant that he wasn't that close to her.

"I'm fine." He sighed as he looked up at the sky, "I wasâ€| just thinking about Tomoko."

Ki's expression fell a little, "Yeahâ€|" she looked up at the clouds, "I just can't believe nee-chan is gone."

"Neither can Iâ€|" he sighed and looked at the the tree, "I remember when we were kids, we used to catch Cicadas during the summer and try to sell them. I remember one time, just before I started high school, Tomoko left one of the Cicadas on my desk which reminded me that we used to do that. I had totally forgotten about that until then." He smiled, he remembered how he did feel touched that Tomoko did remember those times like he did. Even though he didn't show it.

"That sounds lovely. I'm sure Tomoko enjoyed that." Ki-chan put her hand on his arm in a comforting manner.

"She did..." Tomoki sighed, "I loved spending time with her when we were kids. I wish we still had a relationship like that."

"Yeahâ€| I feel bad that I didn't talk to her over the last couple of years. I wish I did." Ki sighed as she ran her hand through the bright grass.

"You're not the only one to say that." The boy sighed, "I keep thinkingâ€| if I actually tried to help her, rather than just ignore herâ€| she'd still be here. She was lonely and depressed and I did nothing." He cursed himself.

"Really?" Ki scooped closer to him, "Becauseâ€| Aunty said that you were with her when sheâ€| you know."

"Yeah, I wasâ€|with her the whole night."

"Which meansâ€|" Ki's eyes darkened, as if she was going to cry, "If you didn't check on her when you did, she would have died alone!"

Tomoki's stomach twisted like a tornado and he felt like had been kicked in the gut at these words.

"Oh God!" He cried, "Don't say that! I can't bear the thought of it!" He grabbed either side of his head, trying to suppress that image of him walking into her room and finding her dead on the floor!

"You don't have to think about it, because she didn't!" Ki took her cousin's hand and squeezed it, "You made her happy, and you made her safe." She looked up at the sky and pointed up,

"And you know what? She's probably somewhere wonderful now and she's happy. She'll never be alone or sad ever again."

Tomoki looked up at the sky and towards the clouds. He let out a long sigh. Ki was right. At least he was able to make her last few hours on this earth as pleasant as he could. Whether or not that made up for years of bitterness, he didn't know but it was better than just... leaving her.

"You're right." He sighed, "I just wish I could have said goodbye." He felt Ki lean into him and hold his hand.

"I knowâ€|" she sighed.

For the longest time, Tomoki just sat in the garden and staring at the sky. He watched it as it turn from blue, to magenta and to red. He would glance at his phone from time to time. Every minute he would receive a new text from his friends, expressing their condolences. He sighed and didn't answer them. He strongly appreciated it, but he really wanted to be aloneâ€|

That night, Tomoki stared out of his window, admiring the stars. They were just as bright and beautiful as they were that night. He sighed and lied on his bed, looking towards his ceiling. His mind was a blank. He didn't know what to do or thinkâ€| three nights ago he was so sure of what he wanted, but now all of those thoughts had been derailed and he didn't know how to get them back. What was he to do now? The boy sighed as he shut his eyes and fell into a shallow slumber...

Tomoki gasped as he opened his eyes again. He was confused to see that, while still in his pajamas, he was standing in the garden. It was still night, the moon was full and casting a silver glow. Everything was still and silent. It felt magical and soothing. As he looked towards the tree, he was surprised to see two small children laughing and playing around in the grass, without a care in the world. His grey eyes widened as he recognised them as himself and Tomoko as children. His eyes felt heavy as he watched them. Wellâ€| at least he could always see her this way. He sat in the grass with a heavy sigh. He couldn't help but feel distressed at the sight of this, angry even.

"Dammit, Tomoko!" He growled, his eyes beginning to water, "Why did

you have to just get up and leave like this! You were always so selfish-!"

"Hey, you know it's bad luck to diss on the dead right?" A voice chuckled behind him.

"Oh shut up, she still shouldn't have-!" Tomoki froze, "Wait, who are you!?"

"Turn around, baka."

Tomoki turned around to snap at whoever insulted him. But he froze at the sight that met him. Tomoko was standing there. She was wearing the same clothes she was in that night, but she still looked different. She looked healthy, her skin was a fair colour, her eyes were bright and her eyebags were gone. She looked like a completely different person. There was somethingâ€¦ graceful about the way she held herself, as if she were standing on a pocket of air and was weightless and there was a white glow around her frame, the same as the moon's rays casting upon the world.

"...Tomoko?" Tomoki took a few seconds to react to her, quite shell shocked.

"Yep." she smirked as she sat next to him, "Surprised?"

"I-I- Yes!" He stammered, he wasn't sure what to think. Half of him was overjoyed to see her, but the other half was distraught. He knew he was dreaming. In the space of time where he had gone quiet, Tomoko leant into his side with her head on his shoulder. She let out a content sigh as they both looked at the stars.

"You know, I never got the chance to thank you." She said suddenly, confusing Tomoki.

"Thank me?"

"Yeah. For everything you did for meâ€¦ I'm glad you were there. You could have just left me like that. But even after all the crap I put you through, you still took care of me."

"Wellâ€¦ of course I did, nee-chan!" Tomoki answered with shock, "Why wouldn't I do that? If I left you in that room all alone, I would never forgive myself!"

"Damn right! You'd pay for it too. I'd haunt you good!" She said slyly.

"As long as it wasn't the duck face, I'd be fine."

"No promises." Tomoko smirked. She sighed and looked up, the stars reflecting in her shiny and bright green eyes, "Speaking of promisesâ€¦ the reason I'm here is because I'd like you to do something for me." She added as she watched their younger selves, still laughing and playing at the tree.

Tomoki looked at her, curious as to what she was going to say, "Yeah, what is it? I'll do anything you want." Tomoko lied on her back in the grass with a sigh. Tomoki lied down next to her as they both stared up at the sky.

"You know, I have been watching you lately."

"You have?"

"Yep, all the time. Wellâ€¦ I've been trying to, anyway." She sat up and turned to look at the house, "You see how all the lights are off?"

"Yeah, what about it?"

"Well," she looked up at the sky again, "The thing isâ€¦ I can see the ground I can't see you and see our hometown I can't see you. Leave the lights on when I'll go. So I can watch you down below."

Tomoki listened to her with wide eyes. She wanted to watch over him? He looked back at the children, who were now hugging each other. It was strange to see how At one point, Tomoko was taller than him. She used to watch over him when they were kidsâ€¦ being the older of the pair. He looked back at Tomoko, who just watched him and waited for his answer.

"Leave a light on?" He asked, just to be clear.

"Yes, so I can see you and watch you." She shrugged and gave him a smile, "What are big sisters for? Tomoki, you have far better potential than I ever did. You never let me hold you back, except for when I screwed you over with the high school application, and the umbrella... anyway, you never let that happen and I don't want you to now. Go to university, be part of the soccer team, do anything you want that makes you happy, take all the opportunities you can. If you keep a light on, I'll make sure things are okay."

Tomoki couldn't find his voice at first, he was too stunned to say anything. He suddenly felt a wave of emotion wash over him, and he wiped his eyes.

"Funny, I thought you were the only boy I know who can't cry." She smiled at him, "Butâ€¦ will you do that for me?"

"Ohâ€¦" Tomoki recovered and looked at his sister affectionately, "Yes, nee-chan, I'll do that."

Tomoko smiled at him as she stood up. She looked towards the tree and then back at Tomoki. Without saying anything, she grabbed both of his hands and pulled him to his feet. He was confused as to what she was trying to do, but just as he was trying to figure that out, she suddenly started spinning him around while holding his hands. She laughed at his totally confused expression as he felt himself being spun around. As they did, he was suddenly remembered those memories that had been playing in his head for the last few days, that memory of them as children playing and dancing in the garden. He smiled back at her and looked up at the sky which was spinning around with them. For the first time in days, he felt like he was in complete bliss. He loved that he got this moment back with his sister, even though it was in a dream and it was only for a moment. He still got that moment back.

After they stopped spinning, he instinctively pulled his sister towards him and gave her a hug. It was probably the last time he

would be able to hug her like this. He sighed as he released her and looked at her,

"I'm going to miss you." He sighed, he still didn't want her to go. But he knew she had to.

"I'll miss you too." She said before turning away from him. Started walking around the side of the house to go onto the empty and deserted street which was also cast in the silver moonlight. Tomoki followed her onto the street and sighed as she turned around towards him, walking backwards.

"Goodbye!" She gave him a small wave, "I will see you again. Don't worry, little brother, I promise everything will be ok." Tomoki was still frozen on the spot and gave her a wave back. He didn't know what to say. She gave him another smile before turning away and continuing to walk down the street. She didn't walk like someone who was leaving this earth, just like an Otaku walking to the bookstore for her new manga. All he could do was watch her until she faded out of sight, only leaving the glow that had surrounded her. When he was about to turn away, he jumped as the glow that was left behind suddenly shot upwards into the sky with a loud bang!

"Ah!" Tomoki jumped as he jolted awake. His room was still dark, with just the light of the moon coming through the window. He lied back down in his bed and let out a sigh. Somehowâ€| rather than being upset about his dream, he felt content. Like things were right in the world. He glanced out of the window just to look out at the stars. He sighed, reflecting on Tomoko had told him.

"...She's not alone anymore." He sighed as he looked at the twinkling lights in the sky. When he looked at the light next to his bed, he let out a little sigh. He decided he should keep his word with his sister. He reached over and turned up his light and flinched as it went into his eyes. He rolled over in bed away from it, but when he closed his eyes he was surprised to find that the light wasn't disturbing him. It was like it was still off and his room was still in opened his eyes and looked towards the stars one last time. He smiled, as he felt a small amount of tears build in his eyes as he could have sworn that there was one star shining brighter than all the others.

"Goodnight, Tomokoâ€|" he sighed as he closed eyes, leaving the world in a beautiful and dreamlike silence. And in the sky, she could see him, the tiny glow in the darkened town.

"Goodnight, Tomoki..." she whispered as the stars twinkled on, like the loving eyes of a mother watching her sleeping child as the night drifted silently by.

****God, this story was difficult to write, but hopefully it is worth it. Reviews are welcome!****

End
file.